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Healthy Outlook® for World Met. Day

23 March 2009

Every year the World Meteorological Organization celebrates World Met. Day on 23 March. This year's theme is weather, climate and the air we breathe.

The relationship between weather and health is becoming widely acknowledged. There is a link with both the quality of air, especially in towns and cities, and changes in temperature. With air quality declining due to increased urban pollution and emissions more people are becoming affected by heart and lung illnesses.

The Met Office works closely with health authorities and patients suffering from Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) to keep them healthy and out of hospital. By monitoring the weather and informing patients of upcoming weather conditions which may affect them, we have allowed patients to take control of their own health, helping to reduce hospital admissions.

Patrick Sachon, COPD programme manager at the Met Office, says: "The UK has experienced its coldest winter in a decade and our Healthy Outlook® service has helped people suffering with COPD to successfully manage their condition, especially during the weather we have seen this winter."

More about Met Office Health

Notes

- The outdoor environment affects the health of people with COPD during winter. There are 100,000 COPD-related hospital admissions in England, and the NHS spends £600 million annually looking after people with COPD.
- Healthy Outlook® COPD Forecast Alert can drastically reduce hospital admissions, while providing people with COPD an improved quality of care. By being alerted in advance of impending high-risk periods, people with COPD are reminded to take appropriate action to keep themselves well.